

Approved For Release 2001/08/01 : CIA-RDP80B01554R003000220001-8
Address by Admiral Stansfield Turner
Director of Central Intelligence
VADM William Read Retirement Ceremony
Norfolk, Virginia
Saturday, 30 June 1979

At the turn of this century the American philosopher William James said, "The world is only beginning to see that the wealth of a nation consists more than anything else in the number of superior men that it harbors." The United States Navy deserves great credit because it has harbored Vice Admiral Bill Read for the past 30 years. I have known Bill for most of those 30 years. I believe that he exemplifies those rare qualities which we seek to nurture in all of our officers. One of those qualities which is of particular importance today is the intellectual capacity to think imaginatively. The naval profession today is as intellectually demanding as any profession that you can think of. That is why young officers should seek to emulate Bill Read, to follow in his footsteps, not be satisfied to embrace the past--old ideas, outmoded concepts and comfortable fallacies.

For instance, in the field of tactics, Bill Read has blazed new trails throughout his career. His recent reshaping of the destroyer squadron organization of the Atlantic Fleet has stimulated new and innovative tactical thinking. It may sound odd to some to think of tactics in terms of its intellectual content. Even in the profession we have a tendency to think of tactics primarily in terms of bravery and command decisions in battle. We often overlook the increasing intellectual content of tactical decision-making today.

Let me cite just one example. The skipper of a major combatant ship like this one finds that his fighting capability is largely resident in his computer program. That program limits the captain's options, no matter how brave or ingenious under pressure he may be. If the captain does not understand the assumptions--the limitations--that are resident in a computer program that some civilian, who probably has never been to sea, created, the captain may find that in the moment of battle what he wants to do simply cannot be done.

During the war in Vietnam, we sent guided missile cruisers to the Gulf of Tonkin. Their computer programs were designed to control the Terrier missile system to defend the carrier task force in the open ocean. Yet, we positioned those guided missile cruisers close to the North Vietnamese coast to control the air over the land. Few skippers appreciated that their computer program was not designed for that function and when the lights all lit up and said, "Free to fire," that wasn't the case. The envelope for missiles over land is sharply different from that over sea.

In short, today's ship captains must possess the intellectual capacity to understand the sophistication of their weapons systems and sensors if they are to gain the most from them. That is what it takes to be a good tactician. This is exactly what Bill Read has encouraged in the Surface Force, Atlantic.

Bill is also a superb manager and the managerial decisions our navy faces today require more intellectual strength than is often acknowledged. Bill and I worked together on a major managerial problem just 15 years ago. We were commanders in the Pentagon and we couldn't find a place to park. We worked that one over until we found a whole raft of people who were parking improperly and illegally where we thought we should be parking. The end result was that we got everybody mad at us and we still parked in the boondocks.

Seriously, to be a good manager today you have to be able to compare alternatives. Alternatives, for example, of whether a new Navy ship should have one propeller or two. Common sense tells any of us who are ship drivers that you want the maneuverability, the redundancy, the speed, that goes with two propellers. But, is it worth the money? How do you determine the trade-offs in this kind of a difficult situation?

Even more difficult perhaps is the intellectual process of displaying these options in a way that will be fair and clear and will help the ultimate manager make his decision. Ask yourself, "Does most of the staff work we see today encourage and facilitate the weighing of alternatives?" The general answer must be, "No." One of the greatest farces that has been perpetrated on the U.S. military, in my opinion, is a concept called, "completed staff work." Completed staff work really is a means of eliminating the manager from the decision process. Rather than laying out all the issues and discussing reasonable options, completed staff work must usually tends to drive a decision-maker toward one particular decision.

Besides tactics and management, the third element of being a naval professional is to be a strategist. Bill Read has perhaps excelled most here. He has excelled because he has always been able to keep his eye on the broad picture and not succumb to the temptation of being concerned only with the immediate and the day-to-day. Strategic decision-making has been his forte because it also requires a much deeper intellectual content today than ever before. Why? Because strategic questions are so fundamental to everything we do.

For example, why do we need a navy in the 1980's? Of course we know why. Alfred Thayer Mahan told us why years ago. We need to control the seas, and he gave us a prescription for doing that. That prescription was to have the best battle fleet and to be able to take on the enemy in head-to-head engagements. Unfortunately, almost before he wrote, Mahan and his prescription were outdated. They were outdated by the advent of the submarine and then later by the aircraft.

And yet, all navies prepared for World War I in the image of Mahan. There was a great head-to-head engagement--the Battle of Jutland. It settled nothing. In the interval between wars, naval officers continued to adhere to Mahan and continued to overlook the submarine and to consider the airplane only an adjunct to the battleship. Again, in World War II, Mahan was proved to be out of date.

Today, because of the lack of successors to Mahan, because we as a profession have failed to rise to the intellectual challenge before us, even today we lack a coherent, relevant, United States naval philosophy, a strategy of naval warfare. This in my opinion is not unrelated to the fact that a decade ago the United States Navy had a thousand ships and today has 460 and today is purchasing only enough to sustain only a navy of 330.

Why am I saying these things to you at a change of command and retirement ceremony? Because today the Navy is losing a man who understands these issues--who has made a significant contribution in these directions. Young officers, enlisted men and women who are here today must accept the challenges that Bill Read has faced so squarely for these 30 years. They must pick up the baton where he leaves it behind and follow this superior officer--this exemplar.

Bill, you have been an inspiration to all of us--those of us who truly care about our Navy. Thank you. We thank you for your ideas, your stimulation, your direction and your courage.

Marty, helpmate, good Navy wife, your sacrifices have made Bill's contribution possible. We thank you. I wish you both all happiness.

Admiral Johnson, today yours is a challenging and exciting task. You will in a few minutes assume command of this major segment--this important segment--of the United States Atlantic Fleet. We all have confidence in your proven capabilities. We all wish you well as you prepare to lead this force of ships of the Atlantic Fleet manned by our Navy's greatest asset--her wonderful, capable and dedicated people. Godspeed to you. Thank you.